SHAKESPEARE AS A GROOM OF THE CHAMBER

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GROOM OF THE CHAMBER

BY

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PREFACE

THE pages that follow speak for themselves, and are, moreover, scarcely numerous enough, or important enough, to need much of a preface. Nevertheless, as they contain one or two references to the views of the late Dr. Furnivall on the topics discussed in them, it should, perhaps, be observed that they were written some eighteen months before his death, at a time when he was still in the full and marvellous vigour of his mind and body, and apparently likely long to continue in our midst.

No one who is interested in our old English literature, and in Shakespeare in particular, and who knows how much that great scholar did to encourage its appreciation and study, but must sincerely deplore that his labours are over. No one who came, however remotely, within the influence of his inspiring enthusiasm, but must feel his loss almost as keenly as a personal sorrow.

To the present writer it is a matter of deep regret that his own insignificant researches in a small corner of the

field of Shakespearean lore—as set forth in this little tract —can now never be submitted to him for his ever acute and generous criticism.

One other observation only may, incidentally, be made here, which is, that some of the facts recorded in these pages about James I.'s coronation and funeral processions, might serve as a hint to those who have the ordering of such ceremonies in the present day. They might serve to remind them that the social history of Tudor and Stuart times affords precedents more worthy of being followed in these things, and more in accordance with modern conditions and ideas, than those of a pompous etiquette imported into England by the early Hanoverians, and derived from the narrow aloofness of a small German court. The free cordial relations that exist in our day between the Sovereign and his people—as they existed likewise in the happier years of the Stuart, as well as during the whole Tudor, period—might surely be given expression to, in all State ceremonies of a national character—the more so that, contrary to the usual and uncontradicted assertion, there are to be found ample precedents in favour of such a course.

There can, indeed, be little doubt that were the

Coronation procession of King George V. in charge of those who organized that of King James I., it would embrace not only representatives of every phase of our national life, and every sphere of activity within the King's dominions, whether in the British Isles or across the seas, but also of every profession, business, trade, handicraft and calling in England—as did the funeral procession of our first Stuart Sovereign.

Even were it to include a few playwrights and players, it would be the flunkey of the twentieth century who would stand disgusted and dismayed, rather than the official of the Court of King James, to see marching in the King's train representatives of the twin arts practised and adorned by the genius of William Shakespeare.

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

1. ENTRY IN THE "ACCOMPTE OF SIR GEO. HOWME, KNIGHT, MASTER OF THE GREAT WAREDEROBE," OF THE GRANT OF RED CLOTH TO SHAKESPEARE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE KING'S COMPANY OF PLAYERS IN MARCH 1604. (Lord Chamberlain's Books, ix. 4 (5) 8

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2. THE RIVER FRONT OF OLD SOMERSET HOUSE, AS IT APPEARED IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME 18

After the original Picture in the Dulwich Gallery. Photographed by permission of the Governors of Alleyn's College of God's Gift.

3. ENTRY IN THE ACCOUNTS OF THE "TREASURER OF THE CHAMBER" OF THE PAYMENT MADE TO HIS MAJESTY'S PLAYERS FOR WAITING AND ATTENDING ON THE CONSTABLE OF CASTILE, IN AUGUST 1604 21

Reduced facsimile, photographed by permission of the Deputy-Keeper of the Public Records.

4. THE PRINCIPAL COURT OF OLD SOMERSET HOUSE, VERY MUCH AS IT APPEARED IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME 43

After the Print by G. W. Moss, 1777.

5. THE CONFERENCE OF ENGLISH AND SPANISH COMMISSIONERS ASSEMBLED AT OLD SOMERSET HOUSE IN AUGUST 1604, WHEN SHAKESPEARE WAS IN WAITING 49

From the Picture in the National Portrait Gallery, attributed to Marc Gheeraedts.

6. THE STRAND FRONT OF OLD SOMERSET HOUSE, AS IT APPEARED IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME 54

Photographed from the original Drawing of the Architect, John Thorpe, preserved in the Soane Museum, by permission of the Trustees and Curator.

SHAKESPEARE

As a Groom of the Chamber.

ALTHOUGH it has long been known—since April 1864,* in fact—that Shakespeare and his fellow members of King James's Company of Players were each given, at the charge of "the Master of the Great Wardrobe," four and a half yards of "red cloth, against his Majesties Royall Proceeding through the Citie of London," on March 15th, 1604, the inference sometimes drawn from this, that Shakespeare (whose name, by the by, spelt as here, comes first in the list) with the rest of them marched in the Royal Procession from the Tower to Whitehall, has by no means been satisfactorily established. That devoted searcher into every nook and corner, where anything could be gleaned relating to our dramatist's life—the late Mr. Halliwell-Phillips—declared without hesitation that they did; and he has been followed by the most balanced and reasonable of all the modern biographers of Shakespeare, Mr. Sidney Lee, and by many others also, including Mr. Israel Gollancz in the "Larger Temple Shakespeare."

* "The Athenæum," April 30th.

On the other hand, the late Dr. Furnivall, in the volume of the "New Shakespeare Society's Transactions," 1877–9 (appendix ii., p. 15), in which the document—or, at any rate, so much of it as relates to Shakespeare—was first printed in full from the Lord Chamberlain's Papers, by that time removed to the Public Record Office, expressed himself decidedly thus: "I take it for granted Shakspere was not in it." That Dr. Furnivall remained of the same opinion is clear from the fact that in his recently published introductory volume to "The Century Shakespeare" (edited by him and Mr. Munro)—a volume giving in many respects the most charming and most vivid account ever written of the poet's life and works—he ignores altogether his supposed share in King James's procession. Neither did Mr. Fleay in his "Chronicle History of the London Stage," his "Life and Work of Shakespeare," or elsewhere, ever make any reference to the supposed fact.

A like, if not a greater, degree of uncertainty has also always involved the statement, first made on July 8th, 1871, by Mr. Halliwell-Phillips in "The Athenæum," that King James ordered every member of Shakespeare's company to be in attendance at Somerset House on the occasion of the visit of the special envoy of the King of Spain to London in August 1604. For although that indefatigable investigator promised that he would "include the complete text of the manuscript, which has yielded this latest discovery"—the authenticity of which he declared

was "beyond dispute"—in his then forthcoming work on the life of the poet, he never did so. In the various successive editions of the "Outlines," he did indeed reiterate his assertion of "there having been a special order, issued in that month (August 1604) by desire of the King, for every member of the Company to be in attendance at Somerset House;" but in none of them did he either publish the documentary evidence he relied on, or give the slightest hint of its origin or its nature, observing merely, "it may be perhaps that their professional services were not required, for no notice of them has been discovered." Nor did he ever publish, nor has there ever been published to this day, any authority for this asserted attendance of Shakespeare and his fellow actors on the Spanish Ambassador in August 1604.

Nevertheless, Mr. Sidney Lee, relying no doubt on the thoroughness and accuracy of the earlier biographer, has here again adopted his un-proved assertion, though to a certain extent qualifying its positiveness by adding in a note that Mr. Halliwell-Phillips had "given no authority for the statement, and that he [Mr. Lee] had sought in vain for the document at the Public Record Office, at the British Museum, and elsewhere." . . . "Nevertheless," adds he, in the same note, "there is no reason to doubt the fact that Shakespeare and his fellow actors took, as Grooms of the Chamber, part in the ceremonies attending the Constable's visit to London," citing, in connection

therewith, the accounts of the Master of the Revels, which, however, as we shall see further on, do not appear to have anything to do with the exact point in question. On the other hand, several other biographers, in the absence of any particulars or proof, seem inclined to suspect that there must have been some mistake somewhere. Others, again, either deny the supposed attendance, or simply ignore it altogether—like Dr. Furnivall.

Thus far as to two of the uncorroborated current statements about Shakespeare. But there is yet a third, equally unauthenticated, which, dependent on the two foregoing ones, likewise arises to confront the critical investigator. For Mr. Lee, in the passage just quoted from the note in his "Life of Shakespeare"—as well as in the text a page or two before—refers, it may have been noticed, to Shakespeare and his fellow actors, taking rank as "Grooms of the Chamber." Here again, Mr. Lee, evidently reposing implicit confidence in the general trustworthiness of Mr. Halliwell-Phillips' information, has adopted, *totidem verbis*, an unsupported assertion in the "Outlines." For, strange as it may seem, though this supposed fact has obtained a very wide currency, and has been copied and re-copied by almost every writer on the personal life of the poet, except Dr. Furnivall; yet nobody has ever given, or even suggested—if we except Mr. Halliwell-Phillips himself—one word of authority in proof of it.

Indeed, one might almost say that the positive evidences,

certainly the general probabilities, are entirely against its being well founded. For, neither in James I.'s original warrant or Bill of Privy Signet, of May 17th, 1603, which licensed and authorised "these our servantes Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage," and the rest of them, "freely to use and exercise the arte and facultie of playing comedies, tragedies, histories," etc.; nor in the writ of Privy Seal made out the following day by the King's command; nor in the Letters Patent under the Great Seal issued in accordance therewith the day after that—the three documents in connection with one or other of which the statement is usually made—is there anything to bear it out; nor any reference whatever to the actors' position, rank or status. The three instruments, in fact, are all in identically the same words—except that the first is addressed to "our right trusty and wel beloved Counsellour, the Lord Cecil of Esingdon" (Sir Robert Cecil having been raised to the peerage under that title only four days before)—"Keeper of our Privie Seale"—and take the form of a notification to all justices, mayors, sheriffs, etc., that the players were to be at liberty "to shew and exercise publiquely to the best of their commoditie," their "arte and facultie . . . . as well within their now usual howse called the Globe, within our countie of Surrey, as also within any towne-halles, mout-halles, or other convenient places," adding that "what further favour you shall shew to these our servantes for our sakes we shall take kindely at your handes."

"These our Servantes" (one thinks of Prospero's expression "these our actors") is the only designation, it will be observed, given them; and this, and its equivalents, "His Majesties Players" and "the King's Company of players," are the only ones by which they are ever referred to in the accounts of the "Treasurer of the Chamber," from the entry therein of the payment made them for their first performance before James I., at Wilton, on December 2nd, 1603, to the end of that King's reign. Neither has any citation ever been given from these or any similar documents, showing any departure from this description, nor any additional style or title given to them. Nor does there exist, nor is there known ever to have existed, any instrument or document formally granting them any rank or precedence of any kind. Moreover, the entry in the book of the Master of the Great Wardrobe, recording the grant of red cloth, describes Shakespeare and his fellows as "Players" only; and gives no countenance to their supposed status as "grooms of the Chamber," although that book is sometimes cited as an authority for the statement.

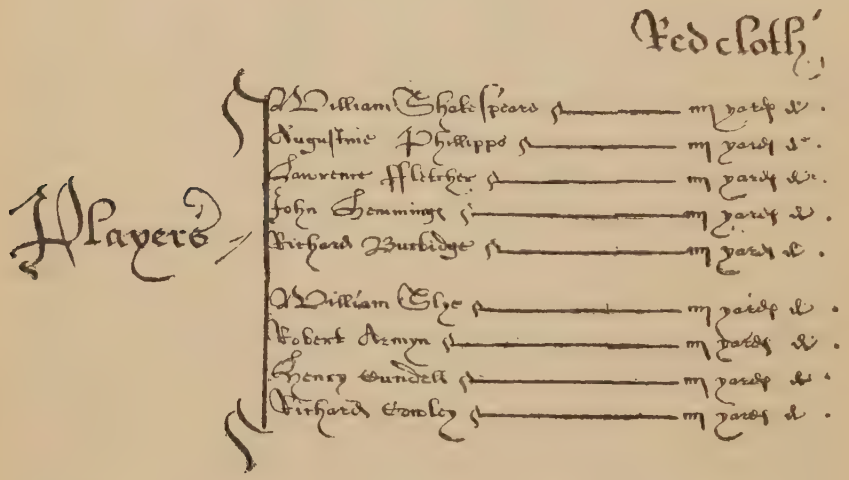
That these three points—small, indeed, if not trivial, as they are—in the biography of Shakespeare, should continue to remain doubtful, seemed regrettable to the writer, if it were possible to clear them up. He, accordingly, set himself to do this, so far as he could. To what extent he has succeeded, such readers as are interested

even in the very smallest particulars relating to the life of our great poet, and who may give themselves the trouble to read the following pages, must decide.

To take first the question whether Shakespeare marched or not in the royal cavalcade, when James I. made his state passage through the city. At the outset, it must be observed, that the procession was in substitution of the one which should have taken place as part of the solemnities of the Coronation, but which had been deferred, owing to the plague being rampant in London the year before, when the king was crowned. We should, therefore, read the words "against his Majesties Royall Proceeding through ye Citie" as equivalent, as it were, to "against His Majesties Coronation." All question, therefore, as to who should take part in it, and what their places and their precedences might be, would have been determined by the precedents of former coronations and the rules and ordinances of the heralds: whence it will be obvious that there was no particular reason why the actors —then recently, for the first time in English history, licensed as "the King's Servants"—should have had any part allotted to them in the great ceremony.

Nor, for the same reason, can the fact that the grant of red cloth to Shakespeare and his fellows is specifically

stated to be "against His Majesties Royall Proceeding" make any difference. For the allowance had, strictly speaking, nothing to do with appearing in any procession, or taking part in any ceremonial; but was simply made in accordance with an ancient custom, whereby every servant



ENTRY IN "THE ACCOMPTE OF SIR GEORGE HOWME, KNIGHT, MASTER OF THE GREATE WAREDEROBE" [LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S BOOKS, ix. 4 (5)] OF THE GRANT OF RED CLOTH TO SHAKESPEARE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE KING'S COMPANY OF PLAYERS IN MARCH 1604.

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of the King's received the necessary material for having a suit made in Royal red, according to his degree, to be donned in honour of the occasion. So much was this the case that we find the allowance of cloth shared by Shakespeare with an extraordinary jumble of people under the

general heading of "The Household," who, we can scarcely believe, could have had any prescriptive claim to accompany the Sovereign in his traditional progress from the Tower to Westminster Abbey. They included, in fact, not only every single individual who rendered any sort of service to the King in any of the Royal Palaces, even those at a distance from London—such as grooms and yeomen of the Bakehouse, Buttery, Pitcher-house, Chaundry, Ewry, Boyling-house, Saucerie, etc.—but also a host of miscellaneous functionaries, such as can only occasionally have set foot in the precincts of the Court—pewterers, brasiers, basket-makers, perfumers, cutlers, napkin-pinchers, and so on; every servant, artificer, or workman, indeed, who discharged any duties whatever for the King, or ministered in the most insignificant sphere or degree to the wants of His Majesty or the Court. But it is obviously doubtful whether these would have marched in a Coronation Procession, and there is no more reason to suppose that the players would have done so, than the falconers who precede them, or the officers of the armoury who follow them, in the Lord Chamberlain's list.

There is, besides, another reason which makes one think it highly improbable that the players took any part in that day's proceedings, and it is this: that though the procession and all its incidents caused an immense amount of interest at the time, and were fully described in four or five elaborate accounts published immediately after, no

mention was made in any one of them of a circumstance so remarkable—as it would certainly have been considered—as the presence of the players among the great Ministers of State, the High Court Officials, and the personal attendants on the King and Queen. The omission to notice such an unprecedented fact—had they been there—would be the more unlikely in that three of these accounts, as it happens, were written by dramatists of note, and a fourth by a man apparently connected with the stage in some way or other.

There was, for example, "The Magnificent Entertainment given to King James," by Dekker, one of Henslowe's hacks, and author of the play "Satiromastix" and that curious work "The Gull's Horne-Booke." There was the "Paean Triumphall," by Drayton, Shakespeare's friend; and "King James's Royal and Magnificent Entertainment through his Honourable City of London," by his "candid friend," Ben Jonson; also "Time Triumphant," by Gilbert Dugdale, who is believed to have been a retired actor or playwright, and who, while going out of his way to eulogize King James—"for that he to the meane gave grace, as taking to him the late Lord Chamberlain's Servants, now the King's actors"—would assuredly have remarked on a fact so flattering to the "quality he professed" as the presence of those very actors in the Royal Procession, as it passed before him.

But all this, it may be objected, is little more than

negative evidence. Proof, however, more positive and cogent is forthcoming; for there is a contemporary document, now in the Record Office, evidently drawn up by one of the Heralds, and entitled "The True Order of His Ma^ts^ Proceeding through London on Thursday the 15th of March, A^o^ D^m^i. 1603, as it was marshalled by the Lords in co^m^mission for the Office of Earle Marshall of England"—the Earl of Suffolk, Lord Chamberlain, being one of them.* This manuscript, which seems hitherto to have escaped notice, sets out with great particularity the position in the procession of all who were to take part in it, beginning with those of inferior degree, led off by "Messengers of the Chamber," "Gentlemen Herbengeners," and "Sergeant Porters," with "Pursuivantes at Armes" marching by the side. After these came "Sewers, the King's Servants," "Quarter-Waiters," "Gentlemen Ushers," etc., but nowhere is there any reference to the players, nor to the falconers who precede, nor to the "Officers of the Armoury" who follow them, in the Lord Chamberlain's book; though the "Masters of the Standing Offices"—such as "Tents," "Revells," "Armoury," "Wardrobe," etc.—had their respective places just before the Judges, and the "Knights and Gentlemen of the King's Privy Chambers."

Further, there is another similar official record of the procession extant among the Cottonian MSS. in the British Museum, entitled "The Precedence of his Ma^tie.^ from the

* State Papers, *Domestic*, James I., vol. vi., No. 97.

Tow'r to White hall, the 15th Martii 1603,"* which also doubtless emanated from the Heralds, and which, providing us as it does with an almost identical list, is likewise without any mention of the King's Actors.

As this manuscript was collated by Nichols with yet another (then in private hands, but not now to be traced) which he published in Vol. I. of his "Progresses of James I.," and with which he found it to be practically identical, it affords us strong testimony towards the same conclusion. Moreover, there is yet another manuscript in the Heralds' College itself, with a similar title, which entirely accords with the several foregoing ones in every particular.

Finally, the fact that no place was assigned to the actors in the Heralds' draft of Precedence for the Coronation Procession of Charles I., just nine years after Shakespeare's death (though again on that occasion they each of them received a grant of red cloth from the King's Great Wardrobe), seems to leave but little room for any further doubt on the question.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that it was otherwise when the funeral of James I. took place. For then, as we learn from a paper entitled the "True Order concerning the administration of all manner of ceremonyes about the solemn interringe of the Most Puyssant Prynce James by the Grace of God Kinge of Great Bryttayne," etc. (printed in Nichols' "Progresses of James I.," from the original

* Cotton MSS., Tit. B. viii., 317 (formerly 304).

manuscript in the Lansdowne Collection in the British Museum, of which there is another version in the Heralds' College*), the actors, who each received an allowance of black cloth from the Great Wardrobe, had then a place assigned to them among the mourners who preceded the hearse of their late Sovereign, when it was borne from Somerset House to Westminster Abbey. But the circumstances in that case were entirely different. For every single one of the individuals to whom mourning was given out (and these largely exceeded in number those who had had a like grant of red cloth for the deferred Coronation Procession) was allotted a place according to his station and degree in the funeral cavalcade, to a total of no less than nine thousand. It was, indeed, a vast and miscellaneous throng. Headed by "Poor Men of Westminster" and three hundred "poore men in Gownes," there marched many hundreds, or rather thousands, of servitors, artificers, grooms, and yeomen in every sort of office, trade or occupation. To mention only a few somewhat strange titles: there were "pott-scourers, arras-makers, spanglers, oate-meale-men, turn-broches, purveyors of rushes, caroche-men, sumpter-men, trunk-makers, brush-makers, bytt-makers, dog-waggoners, cormorant-keepers, picture-drawers," and so on. Besides these there were, of course, representatives of the Church, the law, and medicine; while practically the whole Civil Service took part in the ceremony.

* Lansd. MSS., 885, fol. 115; Heralds' College MSS., Vol. W and Y, p. 213; and also Lord Chamberlain's, ix., 6.

The place assigned to the King's players does not appear to have any particular significance. Described as "Actors and Comedians," they come soon after the various officers of the "Great Wardrobe"—coffer-makers, measurers, tailors, etc. — walking immediately behind "Baston* le Peer the Dauncer," and "Cornelius Dreble the Engineer," and "the Under-Officers of the Mynte, in a classe," and in front of the "Messengers of the Chamber," "all other Messengers," "Herbingers," and "Groomes of the Chamber." They have the same place allotted to them, also, in the similar paper of the Procession among the manuscripts in the Heralds' College—though, strangely enough, in that version "the Under-Officers of the Mynte, in a classe," do not appear.† From the inclusion of the actors in the Heralds' list on this occasion, we cannot but infer that their absence from the one drawn up for the Coronation procession was due to the very good reason that they were not in it.

Assuredly, therefore, we may now unhesitatingly declare that Dr. Furnivall was right when he questioned the truth of the off-repeated, and as often picturesquely embellished, statement about Shakespeare and his fellow-actors—those erstwhile "rogues and vagabonds"—marching in their

* Sebastian le Pierre.

† It may be noted that in the Heralds' College there is also a manuscript giving the marshalled list of those who followed the bier of Queen Anne, James I.'s wife, in 1618, in which her own "players" took an analogous part. Herald's Coll. MSS., I. 4 (Funerals of Kings and Princes, folio 32.)

suits of royal red, under triumphal arches through the city of London, in King James's train.

The second point to be determined is the truth or otherwise of the statement, adopted by Mr. Sidney Lee and others on the unsupported assertion of Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, that Shakespeare, with the rest of the King's players, was summoned to take some part or other in the festivities in honour of the King of Spain's Ambassador Extraordinary during his stay at Somerset House in the summer of 1604.

It was in the earlier days of the month of August that the Constable of Castile, Juan Fernandez de Velasco, Duke de Frias, landed at Dover, with a suite of a hundred nobles, officers and secretaries, besides another hundred or two of attendants and servants, coming as Special Envoy from his master, Philip III. of Spain, finally to settle, and then to ratify, the terms of peace between the two countries, which had just been provisionally agreed upon, after prolonged negotiations and discussions. The treaty, whereby an end was to be put to so many long years of bitter contest, was one which King James took particular pride in, as a notable triumph for his pacific diplomacy, and he did everything in his power to invest the coming of the special embassy with all the importance and pomp

imaginable. On his side the resident Spanish Ambassador, Juan de Tassis, Count de Villa-Mediana, was equally anxious with the King that every honour should be extended to the Constable as the Representative of his Sovereign, and with that object he asked His Majesty that during his Excellency's residence in London Somerset House should be placed at his disposal. This was a bold request, for that magnificent monument of the pride of the Great Protector was considered the most splendid palace in London after Whitehall, and it had, moreover, been allotted as a dower house to the Queen, Anne of Denmark, for her personal use, and indeed on that account was afterwards usually called "Denmark House." The King, however, was in no way reluctant, though he laughingly replied, "The Ambassador must ask my wife, who is the mistress." This the Count did, and, the Queen giving her ready assent, the Palace was, by the King's orders, prepared and decorated for the Constable's reception, with the finest furniture and the most gorgeous tapestries belonging to the Crown. Moreover, the King decreed that during the whole time of the Envoy's stay in England he and all his followers should be entertained at the cost of the Crown —a charge which we may reckon to have amounted to something like £3000 a day in modern currency—and also that they should be attended by a large number of officers of His Majesty's household, specially told off for that duty.

All this had been the talk of the town for some weeks,

and when at last the arrival of the great embassy was at hand it aroused an unparalleled amount of interest and curiosity in London.

Consequently, we have of all that then happened a great many accounts: the despatches of the ambassadors, especially of that vivacious Venetian, Nicolo Molin, who wrote to the Seignory in the style of the modern "descriptive reporter"; in the private correspondence of those two very amusing and satirical gossips, Dudley Carleton and John Chamberlain; in the fulsomely intimate letters to the King of that toad, Lord Henry Howard, Raleigh's implacable enemy, who had just been raised, for his sycophancy, to the Earldom of Northampton; and, above all, in the detailed record of the Constable's daily doings in England, kept, it would seem, by one of his staff—in Spanish, of course—and printed immediately after by the famous Plantin Press, at Antwerp, and published there and at Valladolid in the same year. James I.'s own copy of this interesting publication—a large quarto pamphlet of some fifty pages, of the edition issued at Antwerp, and perhaps sent to the King by the Ambassador himself, as a memento of the event—is now in the "King's Library" in the British Museum, where there is likewise a copy of the Valladolid edition. It is a literary treasure, indeed, which has long been known to historical students,* and a

* Strangely enough, however, it is not cited, nor even referred to, by the late Mr. Gardiner, in his "History of England" (in the time of James I.).

summary of its contents was published in English as far back as 1827 by Sir Henry Ellis in his "Original Letters."

From these various sources, the letters being mostly in manuscripts still unpublished, we learn the following particulars: To greet the Ambassador, as he and his suite came up the Thames on the tide from Gravesend, in twenty-four covered barges provided by the King, the aristocracy, as well as the citizens, flocked to the banks and to the river itself, which, above London Bridge, was almost entirely covered with galleys, barges, and boats of all sorts, so as to amaze the Spaniards. The King was out of town shooting; but in one of the barges, with Cecil, Nottingham, the Lord High Admiral, and Suffolk, the Lord Chamberlain, was the Queen, in disguise, masked. The Constable, when her identity was revealed to him, was immensely pleased with the compliment, and he saluted her with stately Spanish courtesy.

Landing at the stairs of Somerset House, the Constable was met by the King's body-guard, and those of his own suite and servants—a hundred or two—who, with their horses and carriages, had gone by road. Thence he entered the palace, and passing through two ante-rooms, he came to the splendid Presence Chamber, the rich decoration of which, with old tapestries of silk and gold, and an embroidered canopy and throne emblazoned with the Royal Arms made him exclaim with admiration. Still more was he pleased to see ranged around a retinue of court officials,

THE RIVER FRONT OF OLD SOMERSET HOUSE, AS IT APPEARED IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

After the original Picture in the Dulwich Gallery. Photographed by permission of the Governors of Alleyn's College of God's Gift

specially appointed to wait on him during his stay in London, "people chosen for their good disposition and nobility, who were to serve him as pages or grooms-in-waiting, as their Majesties did not require their services themselves."

Among them was a group of twelve gentlemen in red doublets and hose, with cloaks of the same, embroidered in gold with the King's cypher crowned; and among these was one, more notable than the rest, who may well have been, then or later, pointed out to the Ambassador, a certain interesting individual, known to the King and all the Court, the intimate associate of several prominent nobles, one of His Majesty's "Grooms of the Chamber," and the foremost poet and dramatist in England, no other, in fact, than William Shakespeare.

The document—or rather the extract from it—which is printed below in facsimile, and which proves that he was present in the capacity of one of His Majesty's "Grooms of the Chamber," is to be found among the "Declared Accounts" in the Public Record Office, in one of the many rolls containing the accounts of Sir John Stanhope, afterwards Lord Stanhope of Harrington, "Treasurer of the Kynge's Majesties Chamber" in the early years of the reign of James I. From this very roll certain entries, noting payments to the King's players for various performances at Court, were printed as long ago as 1842 by Peter Cunningham in his Introduction to the "Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court,"

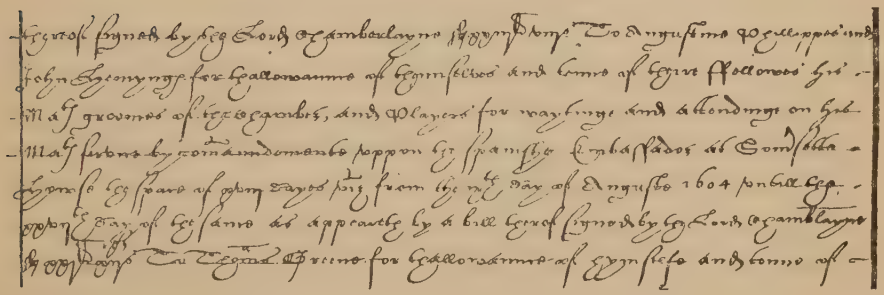
and have ever since formed part of the common stock of data on the subject. But, curiously enough, the entry now published here, which is of equal, if not in some ways of greater interest, was overlooked by him, and has also, still more strange to relate, eluded the investigations of all subsequent explorers in these fields of Shakespearean research —perhaps because they too readily assumed that Cunningham had extracted everything of any interest, and that it was only necessary to verify what he had copied.

Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, however, was apparently not so easily content; and there can be little doubt that the document referred to by him in his letter to the "Athenæum" of July 8th, 1871 (which he promised to give to the world in his then forthcoming "Life of Shakespeare,' but which, as we have already stated, he never published —not even in the last of his six successive editions of that work, appearing at intervals over fifteen years), the document, likewise, which Mr. Sidney Lee and others have sought for in vain among the National archives, is no other than the one now printed here.

Such are the flukes of archæological research, that the present writer was fortunate enough to light on this record within three hours of setting out to discover it.* It is

* This discovery was made by me on July 8, 1907. Since the above was in type, my friend, Mrs. C. Stopes, has lighted on the same entry and published it in "The Athenæum" of March 12, 1910. I, but a recent gleaner in these vast but barren fields, should be the last person to grudge the claim to first publication to so earnest, enthusiastic and indefatigable a searcher among Shakespearean records.

to be found in Roll 41, Bundle 388, of the Audit Office, Declared Accounts (Treasurer of the Chamber), which particular account—as the Treasurer specially declared—includes, besides the ordinary expenses of the Household, "Extraordinarie chardges encreasinge by reason of the often removes in tyme of progresse, and by occacon of



Entry in the Accounts of the "Treasurer of the Chamber" of the Payment made to His Majesty's Players for Waiting and Attending on the Constable of Castile in August 1604.

Reduced facsimile, photographed by permission of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.

Embassadors latelye sent from the Kinge of Spayne, and the Archduke of Austria, to be likewise chardges in this account."

The item in question is in these terms:

"*To Augustine Phillipps and John Hemynges for th' allowance of themselves and tenne of their fellowes his Ma^ties Groomes of the Chamber and Players, for waytinge and*

attendinge on his Ma^ts service, by commanndemente, upon the Spanishe Embassador at Somersette House, for the space of XVIII dayes viz from the IXth day of Auguste 1604 untill the XXVIIth day of the same, as appeareth by a bill thereof signed by the Lord Chamberlayne—XXI^ti XIIs."

That the authenticity of this item in the old account is, as Mr. Halliwell-Phillips declared, "beyond dispute" will be manifest to anyone who examines the original for himself. Coming as it does, just after an entry of a payment made to "seaven ordinarye groomes of his Ma^ts chamber, fowre extraordinarye groomes of the chamber, and one groome porter," for similar "waytinge and attendinge . . . upon the Spanish Embassador att Somersett howse," and just before a like entry relating to the attendance of the "Queene's Ma^ts players uppon Countye Arrenbirge and the rest of the Commissonrs at Durham Howse, by commandemente," there is no possibility of its having been interpolated or forged. Moreover, there happen to be two examples of it. For, of every old account rendered for audit, duplicate rolls were prepared, corresponding with each other in the smallest particulars—except the minutiæ of spelling—one on paper retained by the Audit Office, and another on parchment for the "King's Remembrancer of the Exchequer," and sent to the Clerk of the Pipe Office.

The above is cited as from the Audit Office roll, but the Pipe Office parchment, Bundle No. 543, which

exactly accords with it, may equally well be given as the authority.

Why Mr. Halliwell-Phillips refrained from publishing the reference to it, as he had undertaken to do, we can only conjecture. He certainly never offered or suggested any explanation himself. Perhaps he did so for the reason, which he is said to have given to a famous Shakespearean scholar, still happily with us, who asked him why he so often omitted giving his references, when he answered, because, if he gave them, people would cite his references, whereas, if he gave none, they would have to quote him! * This procedure—which, it is right to add, he only applied to authorities not already common property (these, on the contrary, being, to the great convenience of Shakespearean students, printed by him in full)—has its advantages for the author, and its justification, perhaps, too, when so many literary pirates rove the high seas of literature and scholarship, ready to snatch the treasures of laborious and conscientious research, and parade them, their source unacknowledged, as their own.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that it is a method always involving serious drawbacks as far as historical investigation is concerned, which become still more pal-

* It was probably the same reason that made him omit the authority for the facts, published in the 6th edition only of the "Outlines," which had been communicated to him privately by the present writer, touching the performances of plays by Shakespeare and his fellow-actors at Court during the Christmas holidays of 1603–4.

pable and inconvenient when the author is dead, and can no longer be challenged to substantiate his assertions. On the other hand, of course, it may have been that Mr. Halliwell-Phillips had lost the reference, though all the same quite confident in its authenticity.

However that may have been, and whatever the cause of his reticence in this regard, the publication of the document now, at any rate, completely disposes of the uneasy feeling, entertained by a good many critics, that he may have omitted to give his authority, as he had originally announced his intention of doing, owing to some doubt of its genuineness having afterwards come over him. To this his somewhat hesitating remark—"it may be that their professional services were not required, for no notice of them has been discovered"—may have lent perhaps some colour.

Its present publication, likewise, of course, obviously and clearly establishes the correctness of his statement, confidently, and, as it proves, rightly, adopted on his bare authority by Mr. Sidney Lee, that it was as one of the King's Grooms of the Chamber that Shakespeare attended, with the rest of His Majesty's players, on the Constable of Castile. For though Shakespeare is not individually referred to (Hemynges, the usual recipient of the Royal fees, and presumably the Treasurer of the Company, and Augustine Phillips, one of its oldest and most influential members, who was joined with him on this occasion, alone being named),

yet there he must have been with the rest of them, for the reason, if for no other, that only by his inclusion among the "Tenne of their fellowes," can the full complement of the King's players be accounted for. This will be apparent to anyone who will refer to the tabular list, showing who were His Majesty's players at any particular time, in the late Mr. Fleay's "Chronicle History of the London Stage."

On the other hand, it may be asked, why does Shakespeare's name, which stands first in the Lord Chamberlain's list of the King's players, as furnished to the Master of the Great Wardrobe for the grant of red cloth, not appear in the entry made by the Treasurer of the Chamber of the allowance granted to them, in accordance with "a bill thereof signed by the Lord Chamberlain"? Such a question would seem to be sufficiently answered by recognizing the fact—obvious from many little incidents—that the great dramatist of the Company left its corporate finances, as well as most of its practical management, in the hands of other members, who were consequently the persons generally brought into business relations with the officials of the Royal household. Whereas, when it was a question of personal grants to each individual—like that of the "red cloth"—the Lord Chamberlain would naturally put first the name of him, whose high fame as poet and dramatist placed him on an altogether different plane to the other members of the Royal Company, all actors only, and

merely the interpreters of his genius, as they were the owners of that repertoire of masterpieces, which must have been the main factor in determining the King in his choice of them as his own players.

As to how and when Shakespeare and his fellow-players were given their style, title and status of "Grooms of the Chamber to His Majesty," it is rather remarkable, as we have already said, that there is no document extant in which their appointment is recorded. This, however, is explained by the fact that the Lord Chamberlain's Warrant-Books for the years 1603 to 1628 are missing; though there are some of subsequent dates, from which we may infer that the position was conferred on them by warrant, and by their being formally sworn in to their office, though "without fee," "to attend his Majesty in the quality of players."

The absence of any fee, except such as the Company received when they presented a play at Court, is too clearly and frequently stated in the warrants appointing individual players, to admit of any doubt that it applied to all of them. The annual fee "to every of them" of "£3 6*s.* 8*d.*," recorded* as payable, in 1614, according with the old custom of the Tudor Court, to the King's "Plaiers of Enterludes 8," seems to refer to mummers, who, perhaps, sang in a sort of recitative at masques and anti-masques.†

Reverting to the special fee paid to the King's players, in August 1604, by the Treasurer of the Chamber:

* Lansdowne MSS., 272, folio 27. † See note, p. 61.

Augustine Phillips, its recipient, with Hemynges, for distribution among the rest, is well known to all interested in the biography of Shakespeare as one of his closest friends, who, at the time we are treating of, had been associated with him for at least eight years. He, it will be recalled, was the member of the company specially responsible for the performance of Richard II. at the "Globe," at the particular request of, and in consideration of a special fee from, certain co-conspirators of Essex and Southampton, in support of Essex's mad rebellious enterprise on the day before the one fixed for the outbreak against Elizabeth's Government; and he afterwards gave evidence at their trial to explain the circumstances in which the tragedy was acted, and to extenuate the action therein of the players.

Southampton, liberated from prison at once on the accession of James I., was then, in the summer of 1604, in the highest favour at Court; and it may well have been at his suggestion—if we may be pardoned for "choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden"—that Phillips, Shakespeare, and their fellows, received the King's Command to wait on the Constable.

What these waitings and attendances of Shakespeare's at Somerset House during these eighteen days involved we can only arrive at by inference, vaguely, which must still leave the exact facts rather doubtful. But of one thing we may be pretty certain, and that is, that they had

nothing whatever to do with anything like the acting of plays; and for this reason: that the accounts of the "Treasurer of the Chamber" contain no record of any payment of fees, such as was customary whenever the King's players gave a performance at Court. Moreover, the careful diary of the Constable's doings, which, as we have already stated, was kept by his orders, contains no mention of any such thing—as, indeed, was to be expected, for had a dramatic entertainment of any sort been presented before His Excellency and suite, not one of them probably, except, perhaps, the Count De Villa-Mediana, the resident Spanish ambassador, would have understood a single word of it.

The popular amusements like bear- and bull-baiting, and "feates of activitie," such as rope-dancing, vaulting, and horsemanship, were different; and of these we do find record as having been provided for the special delectation of the Spaniards at Whitehall, in the afternoon of the day of the solemn swearing of the peace, after the grand banquet given by the King in their honour. It was certainly to these exhibitions that the items of charge made by Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels—referred to, as mentioned above, by Mr. Sidney Lee—must have mainly, if not solely, related. Moreover, all these several diversions were carefully noticed by the Constable's chronicler: in particular the cruel baiting of the poor blind bear with powerful Irish greyhounds, until exhausted,

bleeding and howling with pain, the wretched beast was dragged away to be kept for another day's "sport"—this being specially noted as having afforded the spectators "great amusement."

The entry in the Revels' accounts (Roll No. 2805, Declared Accounts, Pipe Office) is for the attendance of the Master of the Revels for three days, with four men (to direct the entertainments), "at the receaving of the Constable of Spayne"—where the word "receaving" must be taken to mean, not his formal reception on his arrival at Somerset House, but either his State reception at Whitehall on the day of the ratification, or perhaps, generally, the whole reception and entertainment of the embassy during its stay in London. The Treasurer's accounts show that the bulls and bears were brought from "Paris Garden" in Southwark, close to where Shakespeare lived at one time, by Henslowe, the old actor-manager, and the recently appointed "Deputy Master of his Majesty's Game," to the "courte at Whitehall." This was probably on the day before the show, and their removal the day after would make up the three days' attendance accounted for by the Revels' Office. In no such ways, however, of amusing the Spaniards can Shakespeare and his fellow-players have taken any part.

We may say, in fact, that their duties were pretty certainly ceremonial only—which was, doubtless, the case also with the eight "ordinarie groomes of his Ma$^{ts.}$ cham-

ber," as well as the "fower extraordinarye groomes of the chamber," who were associated with the players in this special service of waiting on the Constable. It should, perhaps, be noted, however, that there was this point of difference between them: that whereas the "ordinarie" and "extraordinarie" grooms attended in the usual course of their employment as members of the Royal Household, by direction of the Lord Chamberlain, the players, on the other hand, seem to have received a special command from the King himself, implying thereby that it was at his particular desire that they undertook duties so much outside their ordinary sphere. So exceptional, indeed, was their attendance in this case, that their services never appear to have been requisitioned again, during the whole course of the reign of James I. But then the occasion itself was exceptional—the King being extremely desirous of investing the Ambassador's sojourn in London with all possible state and pomp, in order that he might convey to his own sovereign in Madrid glowing reports of the wealth of James's kingdom and the splendour of his Court. That he largely succeeded in his object is clear from the way in which the Constable's official narrator extolled everything he witnessed at Somerset House and Whitehall, while the Ambassador himself gave personal expression to his admiration in several interviews he had with King James's ministers: the number of people—officials, guards, gentlemen-in-waiting—standing about and having nothing par-

ticular to do, except to pay their respects to him, having, it appears, especially impressed and pleased him.

All things considered, therefore, everything points to the main function of Shakespeare and his fellow actors having been very much what is said to be that of the modern gentleman-usher at the Court of St. James's—to stand about and try to look pleasant. And, indeed, as regards anything of a merely spectacular or ceremonial kind, we may be sure that the practised players from "the Globe" would have acquitted themselves quite as well as any of the ordinary minor officials of the Lord Chamberlain's Department. At the same time, it is, of course, quite possible, or even likely, that they may have had some duties to discharge of a more definite, practical and active sort. For we must bear in mind that in old days the various officers of the Court, such as Gentlemen-Ushers, Daily and Quarterly Waiters, Grooms of the Bedchamber or Privy Chamber, and so on, actually performed the services their designations import. They had to light the King's fire, clean and sweep his room, fetch and warm his clothes, dress him, and make his bed. That Shakespeare and his companions were employed in this way in ministering to the requirements of the Constable, we need not suppose, for His Excellency had his own personal servants and attendants, to the number of a hundred or more—exclusive of his suite of nobles and gentlemen—to execute such offices for him.

At the same time, we need not distress ourselves overmuch to think of the great Poet of all time standing cap in hand and bowing low when the Envoy arrived; or attending on him — representative as he was of the King of Spain—when he passed through the Ante-Room into the Council Chamber for a sitting of the Conference. He may even have paid the Constable the homage of kissing his hand—as the great Secretary Cecil did, and as Nottingham, the hero of the Armada, did—without experiencing any of that sense of degradation or humiliation, which some of our universal hand-shakers of the present day would no doubt feel on his account, in having to submit to—in their view—so dishonouring a ceremony.

For, to Shakespeare, as to all of his contemporaries, there was nothing in the least derogatory to "the independence of their manhood" in taking part in graceful courtesies of such sort, nor in recognizing those differences in official and social position and those gradations of rank which were then frankly admitted and acted on, as part of that natural and necessary order of things, making for "distinction of place 'twixt high and low."

On the other hand, it is evident that to no one more than to our great dramatist did the essentials behind the trappings of social convention stand revealed—the real man behind the puppet of power and circumstance, the true entity beneath "the idol ceremony"; though, at the same time—almost in the same breath one might say—by no one was

proclaimed more emphatically than by him the need of that reverence for law and authority, and that subordination and discipline, which hold the component parts of the State together, and alone render human society possible. Even that most uncompromising advocate of the extremest theory of the "Impersonal Aspect of Shakespeare's Art," Mr. Sidney Lee, is constrained to admit that the dramatist has given us, of these particular personal views of his, at any rate, unmistakeable indications throughout his plays.

And in this attitude Shakespeare was, in fact, essentially of his age—an age which, though it had some shams and pretences of its own, was, when compared with our present one, essentially truthful and sincere—of a truthfulness, sincerity and candour, indeed, which it is rather difficult for us to appreciate, steeped, as we are, in a set of pretences and insincerities more complicated and mystifying than any of those of the early years of the seventeenth century. Of one especially of these peculiar cant notions of our modern Anglo-Saxon world—almost unknown to any other age or clime—it is essential that we should clear our minds altogether, if we would enter into or understand at all the ideas and feelings of those times. It is the one, often assiduously preached nowadays, that there is something essentially dishonouring to a man in rendering personal service, and that such words as "service" and "servant," and all that they connote, should be disguised and shrunk from as from a taint.

In Shakespeare's day, on the contrary, as for two centuries after, "proud submission" and "dignified obedience," far from being looked on as despicable absurdities, or at best as inexplicable eccentricities, were universally commended as the natural, proper and necessary attitude of all honourable and honest men in the performance of their duty.

Shakespeare, greatly valuing, therefore, as, from the irrefutable testimony of Hemynges and Condell and Ben Jonson, we are convinced he did, the patronage of the King and the Court, and the influential nobles in it, still more must have valued his new position as "one of His Majesty's servants and players" and "a groom of the Chamber" to the King—a status which, besides guaranteeing him and his theatre against the persecutions of fanatic puritans, and the fussy interference of civic busybodies and boobies, secured for his plays frequent and honoured representation in surroundings of unprecedented splendour.

Consequently, not for a moment can we think of Shakespeare shrinking, owing to any false sense of ruffled dignity, from carrying out whatever part may have been allotted to him as "one of His Majesty's servants" at Somerset House —he, who had seen, probably on other occasions than the one recorded by the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, that "most noble and incomparable paire of brethren," William, third Earl of Pembroke, and Philip, Earl of Montgomery—who "prosequuted" both the plays, and "their Authour living"

(their "*Servant* Shakespeare," as he is described by the dedicators of the First Folio) "with so much favour"—and another nobleman (probably his special friend and patron, the Earl of Southampton), all three on bended knee before their Sovereign, holding one the basin, the other the ewer, and the third the napkin or towel, while "theire high and mightie Lorde Kinge James" washed his hands.

Things were, indeed, very different then from what they are now. One hardly dares contemplate the fuss there would be if one of our latter-day dramatists—say Mr. Bernard Shaw, for example—were expected to write and produce his plays under the same conditions as did his great predecessor. What a terrible grievance it would be were he liable to be called away by the Lord Chamberlain when holding forth on Socialism, or excogitating another play like "Blanco Posnet," to be sent, by order of the King, to stand for an hour or two, dressed in the Royal livery of "red cloth," behind the chair of the Spanish Ambassador, while His Excellency ate his dinner; or to be hurried off to Dorchester House to brush the coat and air the shirt of Mr. Whitelaw Reid.

There are analogous differences also between what the general attitude of people is now, and what it was then, in the matter of dress and livery. We can find no ground for supposing that Shakespeare, reasonable man as he evidently was, and a due observer, apparently, of the conventions of

his day, did not share in this respect the sensible and essentially truthful view of his contemporaries, that a man's dress ought to express, in a general way at any rate, his occupation and business, and the function he discharged in the life of the community—the more so that it was a view having the sanction of the sumptuary laws, and sternly enjoined in many a vigorous proclamation by Queen Elizabeth.

We may feel sure, therefore, that Shakespeare, far from resenting in the slightest degree, the wearing of a distinctive suit or cloak as one of the King's Players and Grooms of the Chamber, or from considering it as, in any sense, derogatory to him to do so, would, on the contrary, have shrunk from anything like the opposite—such as assuming a costume which the status and circumstances of the actors did not entitle them to ; or strainings after a general uniformity among all people in dress—as from preposterous and ridiculous pretensions.

The ceremonial use of clothes, in effect, probably seemed to him as necessary off the stage as on it—men and women in real life, the puppets of chance and fortune, with their allotted "exits and their entrances," requiring the appropriate garb in which to play their parts. Yet, at the same time, no one evidently realized more clearly than he did that "honour peereth in the meanest habit," and that vain is the idea that the real worth of a man is to be gauged by mere externals.

Nor could the fact that he received his red cloth as a "livery"—that is, that the material itself was delivered to him by the officers of the Great Wardrobe, instead of his being given the money to buy it with, have made any difference with him. For that strange idea—one of the choicest products of our modern artificially democratic social system—that to wear "livery" in supplement of wages is a disparaging thing, but that to wear clothes, bought with wages augmented for the purpose, is not so—is a fantastic refinement in distinctions, which was altogether unknown to the simpler and more genuine people of that age, and which would probably have been beyond the appreciation even of the all-comprehending sympathies of a man like Shakespeare.

As to his own personal view, we may, indeed, feel certain that he was proud of his "livery" just as he doubtless was of his position as practical chairman of the King's Company, or of his services to his Majesty in his capacity of player; that he gratefully received his grant of cloth, and willingly donned the suit or cloak made of it; and that he was not in the least perturbed at taking his place with Hemynges, Condell, Phillips, and the rest of them, when ranged as player-grooms in the Presence Chamber of Somerset House.

For, with the exception of one or two casual expressions in the Sonnets, more likely intended in a metaphorical than an autobiographical sense, there is nothing whatever

to show that Shakespeare was ever in the least degree ashamed of his profession of an actor of plays, as well as a maker of them, or in any way desirous of withdrawing from it—a profession, in fact, which he, on the contrary, deliberately elected to continue to follow, long after there was any sort of need for him to have done so. Nor is there anything whatever to suggest that he ever exhibited the smallest inclination to dissociate himself from the other players of his company—those "fellows" of his with whom he remained on terms of the staunchest friendship to the end of his days, and to whom he refers with such evidently affectionate remembrance in his will. To suppose otherwise would, indeed, be to attribute to him a pitiful small-mindedness—to ascribe, in fact, to him as well as to his world, that hateful thing the snobbishness of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of which we can scarcely detect a trace in Elizabethan and Jacobean times.

Nevertheless, there have not been wanting in recent times those who would have us think of our great poet as a sort of modern hoity-toity dramatist, despising the "poor players," bewailing his lot in having to be mixed up with such a set of low "fellows," and swaggering about his fine friends at Court and in Society. This! though it is in direct contradiction to the unanimous testimony of his contemporaries.

On the contrary, the attitude of simplicity and sincerity which we have every reason for attributing to him, is, after all, only in conformity with that strong characteristic, which,

in Mr. Sidney Lee's opinion, is almost the single one confidently to be predicated about our great poet (indications of it occurring, as they do, again and again in so many of his plays), namely, his rooted aversion to, almost his detestation of, shams and pretences,* due perhaps to his intuitive insight into character, and to that penetrative imagination of his, which, piercing through all disguises, not only the physical and accidental "trappings and suits," but the deeper and subtler moral ones also, reached the closely guarded springs and motives of the human soul within. One, indeed, to whom the minds and hearts of men thus lay bare, must, with all his wide tolerance, sometimes have chafed impatiently at the vain artifices, with which they often seek to delude even themselves.

Passing now to inquire what exactly was the dress worn by Shakespeare and his fellow players, there seems no reason to suppose that it differed in any way from that of the other Grooms of the Chamber, ordinary and extraordinary, of the Court—a doublet, hose and cloak. The red cloth, however, it would seem, served only for the cloak. For there is a warrant, dated May 6th, 1629, ordering Liveries "to be delivered unto His Majesties Players John Hemmings, John Lowen, etc.—to each of them the several allowaunces of ffoure yardes of Bastard Scarlet for a Cloake, and a quater of a yard of crimson

* In this Dr. Furnivall agrees with Mr. Lee, noting, as one of Shakespeare's chief dislikes, that of "affectations of all sorts."

velvet for the capes." It is added that this is "the usuall allowaunce graunted unto them by His Ma^tie. every second yeare."* Similar subsequent grants in the same terms, in 1631, 1633, 1635 and 1637, confirm this.† Shakespeare, therefore, if he remained one of the King's players to the end of his days—and there is nothing to prove the contrary—would have received altogether six liveries of red cloth from His Majesty's wardrobe—costing no less than £5 13*s.* 4*d.* each.

From another source we have information, which makes it likely that the Royal Arms and cognizances were embroidered in gold on their sleeves and cloaks.

From the consideration of what were Shakespeare's probable duties and dress when in attendance as a Groom of the Chamber on the Spanish Ambassador, let us turn to enquire what was the exact value of his share of the fee, received by the whole company for their services during those eighteen days' "waiting" at Somerset House. The total sum paid by the "Treasurer of the Chamber," was, according to the document printed above, £21 12*s.* Recalling the fact that one of the two recipients of this money was Augustine Phillips, who, dying in the month of May following, bequeathed, in the words of his will: to his

* Lord Chamberlain's Warrant Books, V. 93 (1628–34), p. 113.

† See also Lord Chamberlain's Papers, II. 48 (1623–24), p. 5: a warrant "To George Johnson, draper, for 3 yardes of bastard scarlett cloth for a livery for Richard Perkins, one of his Ma^ts. Players, at 26*s.* 8*d.* per yard—£4"; and "To Richard Miller for ¾ of a yard of crimson vellvett for a cape, at 26*s.* 8*d.*—6*s.* 8*d.*"

"fellowe, William Shakespeare a Thirty Shillinges Peece of Goold," we may note that it was just "a thirty shillinges peece of goold," together with silver to the amount of six shillings, that Phillips would have handed to his friend Will Shakespeare in the autumn of 1604, as his share of the total, assuming, of course, that they all shared alike. This, it will be observed, was pay exactly at the rate of two shillings a day. Multiplying this by eight—according to the estimates of the best authorities—in order to arrive at the equivalent in the money values of to-day, we get a sum equal to sixteen shillings in modern currency, as Shakespeare's daily fee, amounting to £14 8*s.* for his whole "wait." It is scarcely likely that Shakespeare, who accepted a fee of £2 in gold—representing £16 of modern money—from the Earl of Rutland, for his part, whatever it may have been, "about my Lorde's impreso,"* would have disdained to have received £1 16*s.* from King James for eighteen days' employment in his service. Insignificant, perhaps, as its modern equivalent of £14 8*s.* would appear in the eyes of the more princely of our twentieth century dramatists, there yet may be some among our less appreciated playwrights, who would not be above rendering a like service at St. James's Palace for a similar payment from the coffers of King George.

* No doubt it is possible that it may have been not "our Mr. Shakespeare," but "Mr. Shakespeare, the bitmaker," who was engaged over the impreso—but the probabilities seem in favour of our man.

Further, we find that these individual fees of the players, while serving as Grooms of the Chamber, were almost exactly at the same rate as the salaries of the permanent ordinary grooms, and of the almost-permanent extraordinary grooms, and that they were not far from the general average of those received by the gentlemen ushers, daily and quarterly waiters, grooms of the wardrobe, sewers of His Majesty's chamber, and so on. After all 2*s.* a day then (16*s.* a day now) works out at only £8 less than £300 a year at the present time—just what the "quarterly waiters" used to get in Queen Victoria's time.

Besides, the Company's total fee of £21 14*s.* does not seem so very disproportionate, when compared with the sum of £6 13*s.* 4*d.*, which was their usual allowance for presenting a play at court—especially when we take into account the many incidental expenses, and the payments to "hired men," assistants and servants, when a performance was given at the Palace.

Moreover, the fee was not their only remuneration. For when in waiting at Somerset House, they would all have been entitled to lodging and board within the Royal precincts; and though the lodging would probably not have been very inviting, still some of the less affluent members of the Company may not have been altogether reluctant to avail themselves of a shake-down, even though somewhat rough, within the palace, rather than turn out after supper, and have to get back next morning in time for breakfast—

THE PRINCIPAL COURT OF OLD SOMERSET HOUSE, VERY MUCH AS IT APPEARED IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

After a print by W. Moss, 1777

if they were to derive full advantage from the "allowance of dyett," as it was called, provided for them at the King's expense.

Shakespeare, we may well suppose, would have preferred going home, after the King's officers had been discharged for the day, the Constable having retired to his private rooms with his own followers. We may picture him, if at this time residing in Southwark, walking at dusk, in his red doublet, hose and cloak, across the garden between the Palace and the river, past the golden-winged Pegasus, which stood in the midst of it on a "Parnassus Mount," to "Somerset House Stairs." There he would hail a waterman to row him in a skiff across the river, and down it a little way to "Bankside," where he would land at "Paris Garden Stairs," the nearest to the "Globe" and his own house in "the liberty of the Clink." Perhaps, Phillips, who was also then living in the same neighbourhood—though he soon after bought the house at Mortlake in which he died—would have gone with him.

If, on the other hand, Shakespeare was then staying, as Dr. Wallace's recent discoveries would seem to show, in the house of Christopher Mountjoy, the fashionable wig and head-dress maker, at the corner of Silver Street and Muggle Street, in the City, he would have passed across the principal quadrangle of the palace, out through the great gateway into the Strand, and thence walked or ridden home to his lodgings, perhaps in company with Hemynges, who lived at

Aldermanbury, and Burbage, who lived at Shoreditch—both close by.

In the morning the whole Company would doubtless have fore-gathered again in the Presence Chamber of Somerset House for the ceremonial reception of the Constable, when he came forth from the Withdrawing Room, and for the formal procession of the Commissioners into the Conference Room. Afterwards, all the twelve would have sat down together to dinner, probably at the same table with the other grooms of the chamber, all forming one "mess." By the Ordinances for the Regulation of the Royal Household, then recently issued by James I., confirming and amending earlier ones promulgated by Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth, it had been specially provided that "the Groomes of the Chamber should have a place to dine and suppe in, where they shall meet together"; and full directions were laid down as to what allowance—"Bouge of Courte" as it was called—should be made to each of them, namely, "one cheate loafe, one manchet, and one gallon of ale," besides their "messe of meate" daily. They had other allowances, too, of lights and fuel—"three torches every fortnight; and every other day one prickett, of two sizes; and one pound of white lightes, and talshides and eight fagotts."

To all these various allowances they would have been entitled as Grooms of the Chamber; and we may presume that they duly received them. But there was a vast

amount of peculation always going on in the Royal Palaces, and when they were in attendance at Court as players merely, for a "command" performance, they seem often to have been "done out" of what was their due. Ben Jonson in his "Masques of Augurs," where the scene is laid in the "Court Buttery Hatch," makes satirical allusion to this, one of the characters, Notch, a brewer's clerk, taunting the "Groom of the Revels" with his business, which, he declares, seems to be: "To fetch bouge of Court—a parcel of invisible bread and beer for the Players (for they never see it), or to mis-take six torches from the Chaundry and give them one." To the protests of the Groom of the Revels he answers: "Come, this is not the first time you have carried coals—to your own house, I mean, that should have warmed the players."

Such advantages, apart from any added dignity of a Groom of the Chamber, though they may have appealed to several of the King's Players, can assuredly have counted for but very little with Shakespeare, who was, by this time, the most influential, as well as the richest, member of the Company—richer, of course, by far, and held in much greater general esteem than any of the ordinary minor officials of the Court.

Nevertheless, he may, perhaps, have derived special gratification from holding this Court appointment, for a reason altogether personal to himself, due to the following circumstance. All students of our dramatist's life will

remember the evident store he set by his descent, or rather, perhaps, his supposed descent, on his mother's side from the great Warwickshire family of Arden—whose arms his father, doubtless at his suggestion, had sought to impale with his own, though, as will be remembered, the heralds in the "exemplification," granted to his father in 1599, would only concede him the right to impale those of the more distant Ardens, or Ardernes, of Alvanley, in Cheshire. Now, one of this Warwickshire family, Robert Arden, to be identified, if we take Shakespeare's pedigree to be genuine, as his great-grandfather, had been "a groom or page of the Chamber" to Henry VII.—"unus garcionum camerae"—a fact doubtless known to him, and likely to have made a position, once held by an ancestor of his of the great house, peculiarly acceptable. To the Constable of Castile, who, as we know from his official chronicler, spoke of the Grooms of the Chamber as "los payos," and who communicated with his English hosts in French, they were probably spoken of as "les pages," or "les garçons de la chamber du Roi." It is not necessary, however, to infer that if his Excellency wanted to speak to Shakespeare he would have called out to him "Garçon!"

But by whatever designation the Grooms of the Chamber were known to the Spaniards, and by whatever title they were addressed by them, we may be sure that the Constable and his suite behaved towards every member of the Royal Household with all the punctiliousness of the most stately

Castilian courtesy. This, indeed, is evident from their general demeanour during their stay in London to all they came in contact with, at Court, or elsewhere; and it is borne out by what is recorded in that curious pamphlet, already referred to more than once, which is our main authority for what went on at Somerset House during the sojourn of the Embassy there. That bibliographical rarity, in fact, may now be considered to have acquired a new interest. For when it was first discovered and its contents summarized in Ellis's "Original Letters," eighty-three years ago, no one, of course, in the least suspected that the narrative had even the remotest bearing on any incident in the life of Shakespeare. Equally was this the case even in 1865, when the late Mr. Rye published a literal translation of a portion of it—that part which is descriptive of the grand banquet given in honour of the foreign envoys at Whitehall, after the ratification of the peace—in that most entertaining volume of his "England as seen by Foreigners."

This was six years before the announcement made in the "Athenæum," by Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, who himself never seems to have known of the existence of the Spanish book; or, at any rate, not to have appreciated its significance in relation to the discovery he claimed to have made. On the other hand, Mr. Sidney Lee, the inheritor of his biographical mantle, has been careful to refer to it, as well as to its just-mentioned summary and its partial translation, in his note on the subject, already com-

mented on above. Otherwise, the pamphlet as a Shakespearean document, has hitherto been unregarded; and much of its contents left buried in the obscurity of its archaic Spanish. Only now that the attendance of the King's Players on the Constable is clearly and conclusively proved, does its import to all those interested in the smallest particulars of the life of our dramatist, become patent.

For our present purpose, therefore, every word of the pamphlet has been literally translated by a distinguished Spanish scholar, yielding several interesting points which, minute and insignificant though they be, yet serve to illustrate the episode we are considering, and to aid us in evoking a picture of what were the intimate surroundings of "Shakespeare in Waiting." Strangely enough, indeed, his attendance on the Constable on this occasion is the only public function which we know of—apart, of course, from performances of his own plays—when he can be stated, even inferentially, with any likelihood, to have been present; the only instance, in fact, which we can give, of an appearance of his anywhere, except in his private and domestic capacity.

But this rare pamphlet is not the only thing that is endued with a new interest by the definite establishment of the fact of Shakespeare's being in attendance at Somerset House. For, in the curious picture in the National Portrait Gallery, representing a sitting of the Conference between the English and Spanish Plenipotentiaries in one

THE CONFERENCE OF ENGLISH AND SPANISH COMMISSIONERS ASSEMBLED AT OLD SOMERSET HOUSE IN AUGUST 1604, WHEN SHAKESPEARE WAS IN WAITING

From the Picture in the National Portrait Gallery, attributed to Marc Gheeraedts

of the rooms of that palace, we may look upon an admirable counterfeit presentment of the Constable himself "in his habit as he lived," and as Shakespeare must have seen him, day after day, during those three weeks of his sojourn in London. We likewise may see therein striking portraits of his Excellency's co-commissioners from the Spanish King—Juan de Tassis, Count de Villa-Mediana, His Majesty's permanent "leidger" ambassador in England, and Alessandro Rovida, Professor of Law in the College of Milan; also the Commissioners of the Archduke Albert of Austria, and the Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia, the Count of Aremberg, Jean Richardot, President of the Privy Council, and Ludovic Verreyken, Principal Secretary.

All these foreign representatives are ranged on the left-hand side, seated in front of a long table; while facing them are the Englishmen—the old Earl of Dorset, Lord High Treasurer, looking a veritable Polonius; Nottingham, with grand and noble mien, the ever-to-be-remembered conqueror of the Armada; Devonshire, who likewise had held a command in the Fleet on the same occasion, and who had, also, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1600, repulsed the Spaniards on land with great credit, at Kinsale; and Northampton, the smooth-featured courtier and villain. The great Secretary, Cecil, keen, resolute, imperturbable, is at the end of the table nearest the spectator.

With all of these Shakespeare must have been brought into close relations, whenever a sitting of the Conference

took place; and he doubtless saw them several times all sitting together, as we may see them to-day in this picture —one, indeed, of the most interesting in the National Portrait Gallery, the details of which can be shown to adhere with the closest fidelity to fact. For, not only can the recessed corner of the Council Chamber, where the Conference took place, be identified in the old plans, but in extant views of old Somerset House we can recognize the same architectural features—a red-tiled roof with dormer windows and chimneys—as appear through the casement in the background of the picture. Moreover, the decoration and furniture of the room—the tapestry on the walls with tablets bearing the date 1560, the richly-wrought, high-backed armchairs, in which the commissioners sit, the beautiful patterned Persian carpet cloth that covers the table—are all evidently most accurately and carefully rendered. Even the rushes and herbs that strew the floor, and the large plant that is trailed against the window, demonstrate the fidelity with which the accessories are depicted. For the accounts of the "Treasurer of the Chamber" for August, 1604, contain, among other similar items, one to "Robert Cooke, one of the messengers of his Ma^ties^ Chamber . . . for providing of flowers, strowinge herbes, paper and other necessaries for the sayde Comyssioners."

The scarcity of writing materials on the table—there being a single pewter ink-pot and a pen and one or two

papers only—is probably not without intention, and would seem to imply that the members of the conference are here represented as assembled together for the last time to sign the instrument already agreed upon. The document, which lies open before Cecil, is, doubtless, intended for this; and it may be worth recording that William Trimball, who was Clerk of the Council—the Almeric Fitzroy of the day—received no less a fee than £20 (equal say, to £160 now) "for his chardges and paynes in the wrytinge of the treatie at the beinge here of the Constable and other of the Comyssioners of Spayne."

How and for whom the picture came to be painted, we shall probably never know. Its pedigree, previous to its forming part of the famous Hamilton Collection, is unknown. When at Hamilton Palace it passed under a wrong title, based on the forged or tampered-with date 1594, which it still bears in the lower left-hand corner. Above that is the signature, likewise assumed to be forged, of Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, the painter patronized by Philip III. of Spain. Sir George Scharf, who bought the picture at the Hamilton sale in 1882 for the National Portrait Gallery for £2,000, identified the real occasion and personages portrayed, both from their physiognomies and from their inscribed names, in the lower part of the picture in Spanish in two columns, with corresponding numbers and letters near the heads. When precisely these titles and references may have been inserted is at present

doubtful. They were, perhaps, put in by the artist himself at the time of his painting the picture, and they certainly cannot—for reasons not necessary to elaborate now—have been inserted very long after. That they are in Spanish suggests a Spanish origin, or at any rate, destination, for the painting. As to who the artist was, Sir George Scharf was convinced that it was by the well-known portrait-painter, Marc Gheeraedts, and this attribution has more than Sir George's unrivalled knowledge of English portraiture to commend it. But since his time, "Marc Gheeraedts" has been resolved into two personalities—father and son; and the process of distinguishing the productions of each has not as yet proceeded very far. In any case this Conference picture could not have been the work of "Father" Marc Gheeraedts, as he died in 1603. That sittings, and by no means hurried ones, must have been given by all the Commissioners to the artist, whoever he was, is, one may say, self-evident.

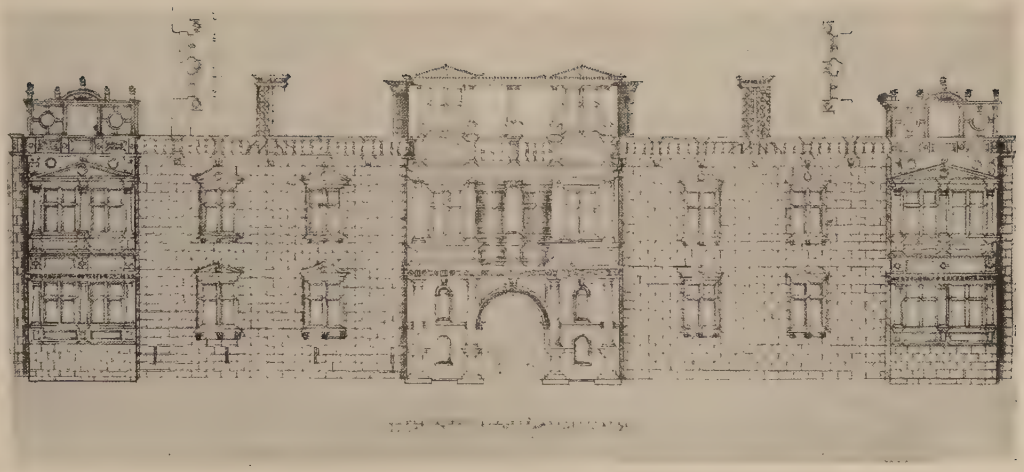
There were, of course, many other occasions, besides such formal meetings of the Commissioners as are commemorated by this picture, when the players must have been assigned prominent parts in whatever ceremonies took place: for instance, when visits were paid to his Excellency by the various ministers and courtiers, on their own behalf, as well as on that of the King and Queen; by the foreign ambassadors to the English Court; and by the deputies of the Archduke and Archduchess.

Perhaps, also, Shakespeare and his fellow players may have been present on the several occasions, which are particularly mentioned in the Spanish narrative, when jewellers and dealers in curiosities and works of art came to Somerset House, to display their wares to the foreigners, and when the Constable and his suite are noted to have made every time large purchases. Perhaps, likewise, Shakespeare and the rest of them accompanied the Spaniards when they went about the town—one recorded visit being to the Royal Exchange, where his Excellency "spent sometime buying various objects of curiosity"; and another to "Bartelmew Fayer and other goode corners," to see something of the humours of the London populace.

But, such suppositions apart, we cannot find that any but the Constable's own suite went with him when audiences were accorded him by their Majesties at Whitehall; either on the first occasion, where, we may observe by the by, that Southampton came to Somerset House to fetch him, and conducted him back home again afterwards; or, when he proceeded to Whitehall on Sunday, August 19th, for the solemn swearing and ratification of the peace. It is stated, it is true, by Mr. Sidney Lee in the note in his "Life of Shakespeare" above referred to, that, in the morning of that day "all the members of the Royal Household accompanied the Constable in formal procession from Somerset House." But for this statement, though it may seem to accord with the abstract of the "Relacion" in

Ellis's "Original Letters," there is no real warrant in the original pamphlet. Its exact words are: "At 10 a.m. the Earl of Dorset came to fetch the Lord Constable, together with many distinguished gentlemen, very gallant and adorned with many jewels, and riding horses with rich harness and clothes embroidered with gold and silver." Clearly the Grooms of the Chamber, in their doublets and cloaks of plain red cloth were not among these. Nor is any mention made of any one being in immediate attendance on the Constable except his own personal suite, who drove in coaches in the procession along the streets, while the Constable and Count Villa-Mediana, in gorgeous apparel, embroidered and bejewelled, rode on superbly-caparisoned horses through the crowded Strand, past Charing Cross to the Gate of the Palace of Whitehall. Neither Shakespeare, nor any of the other "Grooms of the Chamber," it would seem, can have accompanied the ambassadors; and though, of course, it is possible that they may have been ordered to be present in the chapel to swell the pomp and mark the importance of the occasion, it is not a very likely surmise, as that building was small, and must have been more than amply filled by the high State and Court officials, and the diplomats and numerous guests necessarily invited.

After the solemn swearing of the Treaty by King James and the representatives of the King of Spain, and its proclamation by heralds, the Constable, Count Aremberg, and



THE STRAND FRONT OF OLD SOMERSET HOUSE, AS IT APPEARED IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

Photographed from the original Drawing of the Architect, John Thorpe, preserved in the Soane Museum, by permission of the Trustees and Curator

the other Commissioners were entertained in the Audience Chamber at a grand banquet, the minute description of which in the "Relacion," is to be found literally translated, as before stated, in Rye's "England as seen by Foreigners." In this case again there is nothing to suggest the presence of the Grooms of the Chamber in the banqueting room, though they may very likely have been on duty, in waiting, with the rest of the Court officials, in some of the ante-chambers and galleries of the palace.

The banquet was followed by a ball, which, it is just possible, the Grooms of the Chamber may have seen something of, and if so, Shakespeare would have witnessed his friend and patron, Southampton, at this time in the very highest favour at Court, honoured by the unique distinction of being twice invited by the Queen to dance with her.

Following the ball, was the exhibition, already referred to, of bear-baiting, and of horsemanship, and "feates of activitie," especially those of a German acrobat named Shatowe. These took place in one of the courtyards of the palace, and were viewed by the King and Queen and the Constable, and the chief guests and personages of the Court, from a window of a gallery; but down below, where there was plenty of room for all who cared to be spectators of the show, a vast crowd had assembled. When this entertainment was over, the Constable took his leave of their Majesties, after expressing his great gratification with everything.

He and the others were accompanied back to Somerset House by "more than fifty halberdiers, lighting them with torches, until they reached home, when as many more attendants were awaiting their arrival." Among these last were, presumably, Shakespeare and the other King's Players and Grooms of the Chamber.

Next morning the Constable awoke with an attack of lumbago or gout, and was laid up for several days, during which time the King came to see him in bed and bid him farewell. On this occasion, we may with every probability assume that Shakespeare and the rest of His Majesty's Company of Players were drawn up in ceremonious order in one of the ante-rooms, to pay their respects to the King as he passed through. This illness of the Constable's somewhat delayed the departure of himself and his suite. But on August 25th he left London for Gravesend, his famous embassy being thus brought to an end after nearly three weeks' residence at Somerset House. With his departure was also brought to an end the first and last experience that Shakespeare and his eleven fellow-players had of the practical duties of their position as Grooms of His Majesty's Chamber.

For the experiment of invoking their services in this way was never repeated. Not even on any of the numerous occasions when distinguished personages of considerably greater importance than the Constable, visited the British Court—such as the Dukes of Wirtemberg,

Saxe-Weimar and Brunswick, Prince Otto of Hesse, and the Queen's brothers the Duke of Holstein and Christian IV. King of Denmark—was the attendance of the King's Players required, though these various Royal guests were, at King James's "appointment and charge, lodged and dietted at Somerset House," or in one of the other palaces, "attended and served by the King's gentlemen Ushers, Grooms of the Chamber, etc., and their meate dressed by His Highnesses chiefe Cookes."

What the reason of this was, we are never likely to know for certain. Perhaps it was that the players found Court duties conflicted too much with the pursuit of their own more lucrative profession of play-acting at the "Globe," and that they begged to be excused from anything but the mere honorary status conferred on them by James I. However that may be, it is certain that never again did they take any part in any Court ceremonial whatever at Somerset House, Whitehall, or elsewhere.

It is more likely, however, that their active services were dispensed with on the ground of expense. For the cost of entertaining the Constable's embassy proved to be so enormous, and the King's ministers were so seriously put to it to meet the charges, that they may well have resolved to advise the King to incur no costs on such occasions that were not absolutely necessary, and to be content, in the future, with the services of the ordinary grooms. The expenses were estimated by a careful

observer at the time, to run up to fully £300 a day—equivalent to about £2400 in our time—giving a total for the whole sojourn of the embassy in England, for entertainment charges alone, of more than £60,000. There were, besides, other incidental expenses—especially the cost of magnificent presents of jewellery and plate given by the King to the Constable and the other foreign Commissioners — which raised the whole sum total to something like the equivalent of £80,000 of modern currency.

On the other hand, however, it is to be noted that there were received from the Spaniards by individual officials very considerable donations of money and valuables which went far to balance—indeed more than to balance—the gifts lavished on them by the King. For the Constable, on his arrival in England, came armed with drafts on London merchants and jewellers—the bankers of the time —for no less than 300,000 crowns, with *carte blanche* besides, authorising him to give pensions to accommodating ministers and courtiers, and even influential ladies, who had intrigued in favour of Spain. Thus we find that all the five English Commissioners at the Conference, with the solitary exception of that grand old seaman Nottingham, accepted secret pensions from the Spaniards, each of £1000 a year (equivalent, say, to £8000 a year now) for their services. The other ministers were equally willing to be liberally rewarded, Suffolk, the old sea captain, who had fought by the

side of Raleigh and Essex, then become Lord Chamberlain, "alone refusing to contaminate his fingers with Spanish gold." His wife, however, had no such scruples, and steadily drew for years from the Spanish coffers her £8000 a year for betraying her husband's secrets. Cecil himself was the most rapacious of them all. Even after getting his pension increased to £12,000 a year, he was not satisfied; and afterwards stipulated for extra lump sums for each important piece of information supplied.

No wonder that the Venetian Ambassador, writing home to the Doge and Seignory, exclaimed: "Gold works wonders everywhere, and nowhere greater than in England"; and again in another dispatch: "The Spaniards are lauded to the skies, for, in fact, this is a country where only those who are lavish are held in any account. . . . . The great nobles and members of the Privy Council make no scruple about accepting large presents, and scoff at those who hold a different view."

Every one of the Court officials, added the Ambassador, also received gifts; and there can be no doubt that the Grooms of the Chamber, ordinary and extraordinary, who had been in personal attendance on the Constable, were not forgotten, when the day for the departure of His Excellency came.

What form Shakespeare's "tip," as "daily waiter" at Somerset House, may have taken, we are, of course, unable to say; though most probably it was a jewel, or a piece of

plate, rather than gold coin. Possibly the "broad silver-gilt bole," which the great dramatist specifically bequeathed in his will to his daughter Judith, may have been the Constable's parting gift to him.

However that may have been, we can be pretty sure that Shakespeare, interested though he doubtless was in these somewhat novel experiences, was heartily glad to be released from attendance at Court, to get off to Stratford to look after New Place and the rest of his recently acquired property in and about his native town. There, in the quiet of his old Warwickshire home, he may perhaps have busied himself also with finishing and preparing for the stage "Othello," on which he was about this time engaged, and which was presented in the following winter before the King and Queen.

Thus occupied, and surrounded by his old friends and relations, he must assuredly have been far more content than in the fevered crowd that pressed about the lobbies of Somerset House and Whitehall. For, though as a dramatist and poet Shakespeare unquestionably valued the patronage of the King and Court as aids to his art, we yet feel convinced, from innumerable passages in his plays, that Court attendances and Court life can, of themselves, have had but few attractions for him. As dramatic "copy," as it were, and as affording a picturesque background, against which the play of human conduct and passions might be advantageously presented, life in the palaces of Whitehall,

Greenwich, Windsor and Hampton Court was worthy of study, and an intimate experience of it of no small use and service to a playwright. But Shakespeare evidently gauged too well the insincerities and intrigues, the meannesses and rascalities of the ordinary courtier's life of his day, to have been at all attracted towards it, unless to survey it as a curious observer: even had the evident concentration and absorption of his energies in his work as a dramatist left him any time to pursue such a career.

For similar reasons we feel convinced that nothing can have been more alien to his disposition, nothing more antagonistic to his feelings, than anything of a courtier-like, still less of a sycophantic spirit. From him we have no Court masques, no birthday odes, no congratulatory poems, no adulatory verses to King, Queen or Prince. Even to Queen Elizabeth his almost solitary allusion is that beautiful passage in "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," which, as a compliment from a subject to his Sovereign, is, for its exquisite delicacy, universally regarded as unmatched in the whole literature of the world.

As regards King James: while Shakespeare's fellow poets—Ben Jonson, Drayton, Daniel, Dekker—were pouring forth poem after poem of fulsome eulogy and extravagant welcome to the new monarch, there came not a stanza, not a line, not a word, from his pen. Nor do the few pointed references in his plays to the worthier side of the character of the King—chiefly in "Measure for Measure" and "The

Tempest"—exhibit or imply anything more than such a dignified deference to the Sovereign of his country, as Shakespeare—being the loyal and true Englishman he most assuredly was—could not but have felt at that time in an intense degree. Indeed, for this very reason was it, perhaps, that these references "o'erstep not the modesty" of a becoming and respectful, as well as a self-respecting, reserve.

At the same time the all-penetrating genius of our great dramatist can have been under no illusions as to the essential character and disposition of the first Stuart who sat on the throne of England. But to have "seen through" the man would not have entailed a failure of respect towards the person of the monarch; while to one with the all-embracing sympathies and the kindly tolerance of Shakespeare, there must have appeared many points in King James to arouse his genuine regard.

If, in fact, the philosophy of his later plays is to be held to bear any relation whatever to his own sentiments and feelings, we may rest assured that the salient attributes of our myriad-minded poet in his maturer years were these: a perfect simplicity of life and conduct, aloof from the petty jealousies and struggles of the world around him, and a calm unruffled gentleness and serenity of spirit, combined with a wide magnanimity and grandeur of view. And with this are in no way at variance those curious little fragments of Shakespeare's biography, which are from time to time revealed to us by blurred and

musty rolls long buried in the Record Office: whether he is discovered to us as a "sharer" in the "Globe" and "Blackfriars" theatres; as a "sojourner" or lodger with the Huguenot hairdresser, Mountjoy, in his house at the corner of Silver Street and Muggle Street near Cripplegate in Shoreditch; or as one of King James's players, and a Groom of the Chamber to His Majesty in his palaces of Somerset House and Whitehall.

"PLAYERS OF INTERLUDES."

(*Note to page* 26.)

The view that the eight "Plaiers of Enterludes" belonging to King James's Household in 1614 are not to be identified with Shakespeare's Company, or any members of it; and that no such fees as they received were payable to him or any of his fellow actors (differing herein from Dr. Furnivall) is no doubt disputable enough; but to set out all its grounds here would take too long.

Who and what were the "Plaiers of Enterludes" attached to the Households of Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, as well as to that of King James, what exactly were their duties, and what their position—are points not yet thrashed out as they deserve to be. The evidence, indeed, is obscure and conflicting.

Howes, in his continuation of Stow's "Annales," published in 1615, asserts that twelve of the best actors, chosen from those "entertained into the service of divers great Lords," were sworn as Queen Elizabeth's servants, "and allowed Wages and Liveries as Groomes of the Chamber; and untill this yeare 1583 the Queene had no Players." Yet she had certainly always had "Plaiers of Enterludes"—at one time four and afterwards eight—as her various Household Books, all of which have been looked up by me in the originals, show. That of 1585 (Sloane MSS., 3194, fol. 38) has the usual entry "Plaiers of Enterludes 8, fee to every of them £3:6:8." In citing this document, Collier ("Annals of the Stage," vol. i. p. 255) asserts that in it "there is a separate item of Players, distinct from 'Players of Interludes,' with the sum £38:4:0 opposite to them, and this was probably the amount paid to the twelve performers who were selected in 1583."

This is a flagrant misreading of the manuscript, which has hitherto remained uncorrected, and has unfortunately been repeated by Mr. John Tucker Murray in his admirable "English Dramatic Companies 1558–1642," just published—showing the absolute necessity of always verifying authorities quoted by Shakespearean critics—especially Collier—by oneself seeing the original documents. The correct reading is: "Virginalle Players (3) fee £50; fee £38:4:0; fee £12:13:4"—analogous to the gradation of emolument in the case of the players of "Sackbutts," "Vialls," etc.

On the other hand, whether "the Queenes Men" ever really had a distinct corporate existence as a company of actors, like Lord Strange's and Lord Hunsdon's ("the Lord Chamberlain's," to which Shakespeare belonged), and which superseded them at Court, is, it seems to me, uncertain. Howes's statement that the Queen's twelve players of 1583 were allowed wages and liveries as Grooms of the Chamber, is still more perplexing—uncorroborated as it is anywhere or in any way. It almost looks as if he was drawing a false inference from what was afterwards done by her successor.

As to King James's eight "Plaiers of Enterludes" in 1614, the authority referred to in the text—Lansd. MSS., 272, folio 27—which was first given by Dr. Furnivall, appears to have been unknown to Collier, and is not cited by Mr. Tucker Murray. The document Collier did refer to ("Annals of the Stage," vol. i. p. 359) is Antiq. Soc. MSS., No. 74, apparently of a somewhat earlier date. The entry therein—as well as in No. 75, which is almost a counterpart of it—reads "Plaiers on in Lutes, fee, 66*s.* a peece," suggestive of some confusion on the part of the scribe with "Plaiers on the Lutes."

It may be, of course, that there was provision in James I.'s household expenditure for fees for eight players and no more, and that these were paid to no other than the eight leading members of the King's Company—Shakespeare, of course, being one of them—in addition to the large sums allowed them for every performance at Court. This might explain why single appointments as King's players were usually stated to be "without fee," there being no vacancies for playerships "with fee." But it seems more likely that the "Players of Interludes" were not skilled actors of comedy and tragedy at all; but rather mummers and buffoons, players of short farcical pieces, and exhibitors of "feates of activitie"—much like what are now called "patter-song" and "knock-about artistes"—liable to be called upon for their services at any time, and held to be sufficiently rewarded with £3 6*s.* 8*d.* a year each for their antics.

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GREAT WINDMILL STREET, W., AND DUKE STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E.

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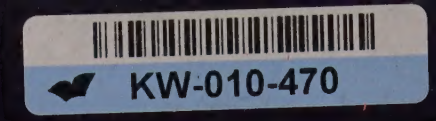
WITHDRAWN


KW-010-470